



Framework for

PUBLISHER EMPOWERMENT

SUMMARY

Seeing the Forest from the Trees

“The obvious is that which is never seen until someone expresses it simply.”

Given the ongoing discussion about supply path optimization and the complexities of the connected TV ecosystem, TVIQ believes that we must broaden the conversation and address the fundamentally broken structure of how CTV monetization is handled.

While companies like The Trade Desk and Magnite are creating an important dialogue about direct supply paths, participation in the very supply paths they promote comes at an unfair cost to the very publishers that those companies purport to want to support. As a result, the structure of this ecosystem is fractured and conversations about how to fix it are missing the most important part. As an industry, we are staring at the trees and missing the forest.

Publishers Today Face Three Structural Challenges:

1. Their inventory ownership rights are dictated by distribution platforms.
2. Their bid requests are routinely devalued by distributors.
3. They are limited in how they can represent and value their own supply.

These dynamics force publishers to give up control, transparency, and pricing power over the very ad dollars their content creates. Unless addressed, the imbalance will continue to concentrate power with streamers at the expense of the content creators who make the ecosystem possible. The mechanics of the transaction layer can't be fixed until we address the underlying imbalance in the playing field.

Without their content, the streamers wouldn't exist: all streamers rely on mostly third-party-produced content. However, streamers have not only aggregated this content but in doing so, they've aggregated more than half of the ad inventory the viewers of this content create.

In summation, channel operators and publishers who want to control their own inventory and own their own future are immediately disadvantaged in this broken and unfair structure. Because of this inequality, the building blocks of the CTV space have been assembled into a wall that is often blocking them from the very ad dollars their content creates.

TVIQ believes a new and better set of rules should be adopted that shift the power of control back to the publishers - where it belongs.

- Scott Ryan

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

Systemic Roadblocks Creating Slower Growth & Upside

CHALLENGE 1: Inventory + Ownership Rights Dictated by Platforms/Distributors

The first and most fundamental challenge is that inventory ownership rights are dictated by distribution platforms.

- To gain distribution, broadcasters are often required to give away between 50–100% of their ad inventory.
- Even when allowed to retain a share, channel operators have no control over how the streamer prices or packages the other half of inventory. If streamers demand 100% of the inventory, publishers lose all control over revenue and visibility into how their content monetizes.
- Attempts by publishers to regain control are often met with threats of lost distribution—a take-it-or-leave-it partnership.
- Publishers may be forced to repurchase their own inventory at retail prices through opaque “buy back” agreements. In doing so, they are flagged as “resellers,” harming broader demand by appearing as an additional hop in the supply chain.

CHALLENGE 2: Bid Requests are Devalued by Distributors

The second major challenge is that bid requests are routinely devalued by distributors.

- Publishers often lack control over which bid signals they can send in the bid request for the inventory they still hold.
- Streamers may underprice their share of impressions, obscuring the real value of the publisher’s portion and making it appear less attractive to buyers.
- As a result, publishers are left at a disadvantage in the marketplace, unable to compete fairly for demand that their content rightly generates.

CHALLENGE 3: Limits on How Publishers can Present and Value their Inventory

The third challenge is that publishers are limited in how they can represent and value their own inventory.

- Streamers depend heavily on third-party-produced content, yet in aggregating that content they also aggregate more than half of the associated ad inventory.
- This structural imbalance prevents publishers from accessing the ad dollars their content produces, blocking them from participating fully in the economic value chain of CTV.

BROADER IMPACT ON STAKEHOLDERS

The Ripple Effect of Publisher Challenges

The challenges facing publishers do not stop with them. When publishers lose control of inventory, when bid requests are devalued, and when they are limited in how they can represent their supply, the effects are felt across the entire value chain. Buyers, distributors, consumers, and the industry overall all absorb consequences that reduce efficiency, trust, and sustainability.

BUYERS

Eroded Trust and Inefficient Spend

For buyers, these dynamics erode trust and efficiency. A lack of transparency around ownership, pricing, and signals makes it harder to plan, measure, and optimize campaigns. Inventory often carries unnecessary markups through multiple hops in the chain, and valuable signals are withheld, limiting scale and precision. The result is wasted spend and diminished confidence in the programmatic CTV marketplace.

CONSUMERS

Empty Pods and Lower Engagement

For consumers, the impact is increasingly visible. Ad pods often run with empty slots, which reduces monetization for all participants while also creating a worse viewing experience. When ad breaks are unfilled, audiences are more likely to churn. Coupled with weaker targeting and less reinvestment in programming, the result is lower quality, fewer content choices, and declining engagement.

STREAMERS

Protecting Their Inventory and Limiting Growth

The short-term gains from capturing and labeling publishers' share of inventory as "direct" come at a longer-term cost. By defending their portion while leaving publishers with "resold" inventory that is less signal-rich and harder to monetize, they complicate the supply chain and suppress overall demand. This dynamic shifts leverage to trade desks and aggregators, devalues publisher supply, and creates conditions that reduce demand for their own inventory over time.

INDUSTRY

Systemic Inefficiency and Suppressed Demand

For the industry overall, the consequences are systemic. By fragmenting supply and manufacturing complexity, the value of CTV inventory is diluted. Demand has not yet caught up with the rapid growth of supply, and instead of encouraging new demand, these practices restrict it by creating mistrust and inefficiency. In the long term, this dynamic prevents new dollars from flowing into the ecosystem, stifles innovation, and weakens the sustainability of the entire supply chain.

The Path Forward

This Framework directly addresses these risks by creating shared rules of the road that benefit every participant in the ecosystem.

- For buyers, standardized inventory definitions, transparent signals, and consistent data access.
- For distributors, strengthening monetization for all inventory and more revenue to the content creators.
- For consumers, more ad breaks that are filled, with relevant and less disruptive ads.
- For the industry overall, the framework reduces complexity, unlocks new demand, and builds a more resilient supply chain that can sustain growth well into the future.

CTA + FIRST PRINCIPLES

Call To Action

While a few parties have correctly pointed out these issues, TVIQ is taking the unique stance of proposing a new global framework that fundamentally resets the CTV ecosystem, pushes power back into the control of publishers, and calls for publishers to unite with us in the development and launch of a new **Framework for Publisher Empowerment (FPE)**.

TVIQ's proposed FPE is a roadmap that industry trade groups like the IAB, the Independent Streamer Alliance, and the Local Media Consortium could adopt as agreed-upon terms set between publishers and streamers, much as buyers and sellers have long operated under the IAB Terms and Conditions. This framework can act as a standard set of terms between streamers and channel operators and can be used in future negotiations to even the playing field and standardize inventory-sharing agreements.

Our belief is that these terms are something publishers should enforce, streamers should adopt, and advertisers should embrace. Doing so would empower publishers to maximize their earnings and re-invest in content and audience development. This paradigm shift would set off a flywheel of publisher growth, creating a healthier ecosystem for everyone involved—including the audiences who engage with publisher content.

FPE First Principles

- 1** Content creators, curators, and distributors are the lifeblood of the CTV industry.
- 2** Streamers are like browsers, and as such, the publisher is the creator and owner of all inventory associated with their content.
- 3** The FPE will create a neutral framework within which there will be fewer negotiations and more efficiencies.
- 4** Adoption not just by IAB members but also by publisher consortiums will make it easier for all publishers to maximize their advertising revenue via a more level playing field.
- 5** Publishers will put their content where they have the opportunity to earn the most money, which may empower new streamers and create a more diverse ecosystem.

SOLUTIONS PART 1

CHALLENGE 1: Inventory + Ownership Rights Dictated by Platforms/Distributors

The first and most fundamental challenge is that inventory ownership rights are dictated by distribution platforms.

- To gain distribution, broadcasters are often required to give away between 50–100% of their ad inventory.
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- Attempts by publishers to regain control are often met with threats of lost distribution—a take-it-or-leave-it partnership.
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SOLUTIONS

Inventory Ownership

- Channels must maintain at least 60% of their own inventory to ensure control, accountability, and sustainability of their supply unless they choose to renegotiate these terms.
- No streamer should claim Owned & Operated (O&O) status unless they directly produce the channel themselves.

Publisher Access & Reseller Rights

- Publishers must always retain access to their own supply sold through their channels as a first-tier reseller.
- Pricing parity: publishers should have the right to sell at the same rate as their own direct sales, with only an additional margin applied by the streamer.
- Streamers must not sell individual channels directly, preventing sales channel cannibalization and protecting publisher revenue streams.

Supply Chain Integrity

- Publishers are always the first hop in the supply chain, even when backfilling their own inventory by buying it back from a streamer.
- InventoryPartnerDomain + Proof of Content Contract should provide publishers with O&O rights to inventory where they share content. For example, if a publisher produces a show carried on a channel, that publisher should hold O&O rights to the inventory associated with that show, similar to how a streamer has O&O rights to licensed channels.

SOLUTIONS PART 2

CHALLENGE 2: Bid Requests are Devalued by Distributors

The second major challenge is that bid requests are routinely devalued by distributors.

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SOLUTIONS

Contextual Data Rights

- Any contextual data available to streamers must also be shared with publishers free of charge.
- This ensures fairness and consistency across all demand channels.

Signal Standards Beyond IFA

- Reliability of supply should not depend solely on the IFA (Identifier for Advertising) or User Agent.
- A trustworthy connection can and should be validated through a combination of correct signals, including: Channel Name/Channel ID, App Name, Bundle ID, App Store URL, Transaction ID (TID), and Schain validation.
- Ads.txt crawlers should work to crawl as many lines as possible so full sales representation, from all buyers, can be reflected without limitation.

Channel Identification

- Channel names must be passed on all bid requests originating from the publisher.
- Streamers are not required to pass channel names but may instead use contextual data as an alternative identifier.
- The development of a Channel Name ID should exist as a persistent identifier or matched key, ensuring that even if a streamer obfuscates a channel name, publishers and resellers can still validate the traffic source and increase impression value.

SOLUTIONS PART 3

CHALLENGE 3: Limits on How Publishers can Present and Value their Inventory

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SOLUTIONS

Fraud, IVT, and Flagging Transparency

- Publishers must receive full transparency into why their inventory is flagged for Invalid Traffic (IVT).
- Direct supply should never be penalized for IVT when the publisher does not control the streamer's platform or environment.

Transaction & Auction Integrity

- Transaction IDs (TIDs) must be generated at the publisher/SSP level, not globally.
- Each unique connection should represent a unique auction (not just a unique ad pod), strengthening attribution and auction integrity.

Hop Controls & Transparency

- Publishers may define the maximum number of supply chain hops (n) allowed, provided that the supply chain object (schain) is complete and ties back to the publisher.
- This flexibility allows publishers to protect fill rates while enabling buyers to approve longer supply chains when fully transparent.

HOW THIS GETS DONE + NEXT STEPS

Summary

The Framework for Publisher Empowerment is intended as a starting point. The end goal is the global adoption of a more equitable set of terms embraced by buyers, streamers, and publishers that governs how inventory is shared, represented, and transacted. Achieving this would create an ecosystem that benefits all parties equally: publishers, buyers, distributors, and ultimately the audiences who consume the content.

To move from principles to practice, TVIQ is committed to building a coalition of publishers and partners with the shared goal of rebalancing the playing field and ensuring that those who create and curate content have a fair and equitable voice in ongoing supply chain reform.

This coalition will serve as the foundation for industry alignment, with the intention of being active within the appropriate industry organizations as well as across the broader ecosystem. It will provide publishers with the collective power needed to shape the future.

As part of that effort, the framework will be available for public comment through the end of 2025. Publishers, streamers, buyers, and other stakeholders are encouraged to register their input by joining our dedicated Slack channel or by emailing us directly. We look forward to hearing from you and working together to build a healthier, more balanced ecosystem for everyone involved.

JOIN US!

Framework for Publisher Empowerment Slack Channel:

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